



# D-Day legacy: 'We in the U.S. do not want war'

Associated Press

OMAHA BEACH, France — President Reagan, making a pilgrimage to the Normandy beaches on the 40th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, said today America stands willing to “wipe from the face of the Earth the terrible weapons man now has in his hands.”

At a ceremony atop cliffs scaled by U.S. Rangers at the dawn of the great Allied invasion, Mr. Reagan spoke of the “bitter lessons” of World War II and declared, “I tell you from my heart that we in the United States do not want war.”

Mr. Reagan spoke from Pointe du Hoc, a

*‘We want to wipe from the face of the Earth the terrible weapons man now has in his hands. I tell you we are ready to seize that beachhead.’*

— President Reagan at Normandy

spike of land that juts into the English Channel where 225 U.S. Rangers assaulted the 130-foot cliffs at dawn on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

★ ★ ★

AT THAT point, the Rangers silenced a battery of six long-range German guns. The losses were heavy — only 90 of the

225 Rangers could still carry arms after two days of fighting.

The lonely point of land was the first of three American invasion sites on Mr. Reagan’s route. It lies between the two famous beaches — Omaha and Utah — where 50,000 men from the U.S. First Army attacked along the crescent-shaped coast.

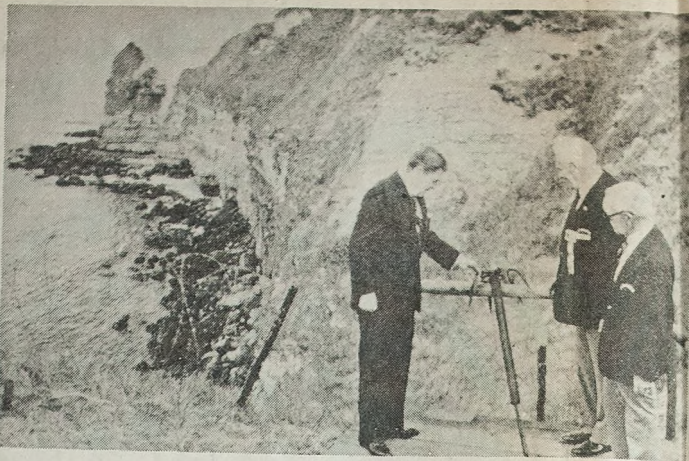
Standing before a rough-hewn granite obelisk commemorating the Rangers’ exploits, Mr. Reagan recalled the “great reconciliation” between the vanquished and the victors after the war.

“In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so together, we can

lessen the risks of war, now and forever,” he said, striking the theme he set for the day of solemn memory and celebration of victory.

“We want to wipe from the face of the Earth the terrible weapons man now has in his hands. I tell you we are ready to seize that beachhead,” the President said. “But we wait for some sign from the Soviet Union that they are willing to move forward, that they share our desire for love and peace, that they will give up the ways of conquest.”

See D-DAY, Page A-4



CLIFF CLIMBERS: President Reagan looks at a grapple hook used by U.S. Rangers to scale the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc during the Normandy invasion in 1944.

# D-Day

Continued from Page One

**SPEAKING TO 62** of the Army Rangers who scaled the cliffs that stormy day 40 years ago, Mr. Reagan said, "These are heroes who helped end a war."

The Rangers were the vanguard of an invasion force of 156,205 Allied troops, including 73,000 Americans. On the first day, more than 10,000 Allied troops were killed, wounded or missing.

On D-Day, high seas swamped landing boats and driving rain obscured the invaders' vision, helping to conceal their intentions from the enemy but making their assault through smoke and fire even more difficult. Mr. Reagan, with calm seas and a bright but cloudy sky for a backdrop today, unveiled a plaque with the names of the Rangers killed in the assault.

"I wish my husband had been here to see all of this," said Margaret Rudder of Bryan, Texas, widow of Lt. Col. James Earl Rudder who led the assault. Then Mr. Reagan walked along the narrow, winding path among the bomb craters and shattered German blockhouses, stopping to inspect one of the Nazi strongholds.

Offshore, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier U.S.S. Eisenhower stood silhouetted against the horizon, a gray symbol of the massive armada of 5,000 ships and landing craft assembled there 40 years ago.

From Pointe du Hoc, Mr. Reagan went to Omaha Beach, where U.S. forces suffered heavy casualties at the hands of German forces, and to the American cemetery some 500 yards away.

"We stand today at a place of battle, one that 40 years ago saw and felt the worst of war. Men bled and died here for a few feet or inches of sand as bullets and shellfire cut through their ranks," Mr. Reagan said.

HE SAID it was humbling to realize "how much so many gave to the cause of freedom and to their fellow man."

Mr. Reagan paused at the grave of Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt Jr., a Medal of Honor winner. Mr. Reagan's wife Nancy placed a bank of flowers before the simple white cross. Roosevelt, who died of a heart attack a month after D-Day, is buried next to his brother Quentin, a pilot killed in World War I whose remains were transferred from another burial ground to the brothers could lie side by side.

Unlike the other allied nations of World War II represented at today's ceremonies, the Soviet Union sent no ranking leader. In a symbol of the postwar order, the Soviets, who suffered 20 million dead fighting Nazi Germany, downplayed the event; West Germany, now an ally, was not invited.

The Soviet Army newspaper *Krasnaya Vozda* said today the D-Day observance was an attempt "to

falsify the history of the Second World War" by ignoring Soviet advances on the eastern front.

The Allied landing, involving troops from the United States, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands, was the greatest seaborne invasion in history. It was followed less than a year later by the liberation of Europe from Adolf Hitler's Third Reich.

At Utah Beach, Mr. Reagan was joined other Allied heads of state in commemorating the anniversary. Also attending were French President Francois Mitterrand, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, King Olaf of Norway, King Baudouin of Belgium, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg.

Mitterrand, who escaped from a German prisoner of war camp to lead a Resistance network, laid a wreath in nearby Bayeux, the first major point liberated by the invasion force. Queen Elizabeth and her husband, Prince Philip, also visited Bayeux, then drove to the British cemetery, where they joined Mitterrand for a memorial ceremony.

While West German officials did not attend, they will participate fully in the allied economic summit opening Thursday in London, the focal point of Mr. Reagan's 10-day European visit.

THE LATE Gen. Omar Bradley once said: "Every man who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero."

Rows of white crosses and Stars of David mark the graves of 9,386 men and women, most of whom died in the Normandy campaign.

Mr. Reagan, in his remarks at Pointe du Hoc, painted a grim picture of those fateful landings.

TODAY, HE SAID, the "air is soft; but, 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men; the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon."

He said those who fought here "knew some things are worth dying for; one's country is worth dying for; and democracy is worth dying for, because it is the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man."

He said the allies "are bound today by what bound us 40 years ago, the same loyalties, traditions and beliefs."

"And we are bound by reality: the strength of America's allies is vital to the United States, and the American security guarantee is essential to the continued freedom of Europe's democracies."

"We were with you then; we are with you now. Your hopes are our hopes, and your destiny is our destiny," he said.

But he recalled again the somber notes. "In spite of our great efforts and successes, not all that followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. Some liberated countries

were lost. The great sadness of this loss echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague and East Berlin. The Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They are still there, unwanted, uninvited, unyielding, almost 40 years after the war."



D-DAY: American troops and supply vehicles splash ashore at Normandy on June 6, 1944.

# With tested troops, the assault is on

The rehearsals are over. What were untested troops a year before are blooded now, after the campaigns and landings in North Africa, Sicily, the Italian boot. Italy is in surrender, Mussolini a fugitive, Rome falls to the Allies on June 4, 1944, and they pursue the German northward.

There is an air of anticipation. Britain, like an enormous troopship at anchor, groans under the weight of three million armed men. Day and night, Allied planes pummel the heart and shore of Europe.

The inventory shows 47 divisions barracked in the United Kingdom, 21 of them American, the rest British, Canadian and Polish. There are 5,000 vessels, 4,000 of them assault craft, awaiting the word. In this armada are the grim silhouettes of six battleships, 22 cruisers and 93 destroyers. In the air are 4,900 fighters and 5,800 bombers.

On the day that Rome falls, the English Channel is swept by rough weather. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower calls off the invasion, even though his men are already on ships. The weather turns marginal, and the general decides to go.

In the darkness of early morning June 6, paratroopists of the U.S. 101st and 82nd Airborne drop inland of a slice of shore called Utah Beach. The armada slips anchor and grinds its way to Normandy — a string of beaches named Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword. There is a shortage of landing



"FULL VICTORY . . ." General Eisenhower gives the order of the day, "Full victory — nothing less," to American paratroopers in England before their departure for France.

craft, but they must make do. In the wake of the aerial bombardment, 9,000 tons of bombs in 12 hours, the men go ashore. The U.S. 2nd Ranger Battalion hits the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, somehow takes them, but only 76 of the 235 who went ashore survive. In the first 25 hours,

the American First Army takes almost 7,000 casualties.

But somehow, some 180,000 troops claim the shore and begin to move inland, opening a gap for the unleashed fury behind them. During the first six days, 326,000 come ashore, the vanguard for more than four

million to follow. In the wake of Operation Overlord on only one battleground, the Americans must use bulldozers to clear away 40,000 German bodies.

The liberation is slow, but it begins at 6:30 a.m. that day in 1944.

# A German and a Yank

Both veterans settled in land they had fought for

By MICHAEL DOBBS  
The Washington Post

BAYEUX, France — Howard Gillingham and Edwin Schmieger fought on different sides in the Battle for Normandy — and each has a very different view of the 40th anniversary of D-Day.

For Gillingham, who served with the American victors, today's ceremonies are a welcome opportunity to relive one of the great episodes in his life and bathe in public esteem for the men who liberated France. For Schmieger, who was one of the vanquished Germans, the same occasion provokes concern about the resurfacing of old animosities that he believes are best forgotten.

Gillingham and Schmieger are among the handful of former soldiers on both sides who, after the war was over, returned to Normandy, married French women, and raised families on the soil over which they had once fought.

Apart from his Midwestern American accent, there is little to distinguish Gillingham from other cafe owners in small towns throughout Normandy. A former tank mechanic with the U.S. 2nd Armored Division, he drinks and plays cards with the locals.

As one of the few American veterans living in Normandy, Gillingham is frequently invited to

commemorative ceremonies for soldiers killed in the Normandy campaign. Today, he was at the American cemetery above Omaha Beach for a joint ceremony led by President Reagan and French President Francois Mitterrand.

Just a few miles away from Gillingham's village cafe, Schmieger has built a house that is as Teutonic in inspiration as could be imagined. There are Alpine scenes and a cuckoo clock on the walls.

Schmieger, who served as a paratrooper with the 3rd German Parachute Division, did not attend any of the D-Day commemorations. With a gentle smile, he recalls the fanatical belief of a generation of young Germans in Adolf Hitler as "the savior of the German nation."

"Nowadays everybody is saying that these ceremonies are not directed against Germans, but only against the Nazis. What they forget is that virtually all Germans of my age believed in Nazism at that time. The two things were inseparable," said Schmieger who was 19 in 1944.

Howard Gillingham first met his future wife Jeanine soon after he landed in Normandy on the third day after D-Day. He was 21, she an impressionable 17. Looking back on their courtship, conducted in the hedgerows and ditches around the

U.S. Army camp, Jeanine Gillingham laughs that "American boyfriends were all the rage at the time — but mine was one of the few to come back to find me after the war."

Edwin Schmieger met his future wife, Marie-Yvonne, while working as a compulsory laborer on a farm in Normandy. A country girl studying German to become a teacher, she used to stop to chat with the tall, blond prisoner of war when she came to the farm to collect milk.

It was difficult being German in France just after the war, with memories of the occupation still fresh and the French determined to erase the shame of collaboration. But Schmieger says he did not have much of a choice about where to live. Like former members of the SS, former paratroopers were not even welcome in Germany where they were blamed for continuing the war unnecessarily.

Thanks to hard work, and his skill as a furniture-maker, he was gradually accepted into a community that at first rejected him. But some of the stigma has remained.

A couple of years ago, Marie-Yvonne Schmieger lodged a formal complaint with the local school when their children were taunted with the nickname boche, the derogatory French equivalent of "kraut."